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PROCEEDINGS

AND

ADDRESS

OF THE

✓ "CHARLESTON PORT SOCIETY,"

IN BEHALF

OF THE ESTABLISHMENT

OF

"A SAILOR'S HOME,"

IN THIS CITY.

---

*Published by order of the Society.*

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Charleston, 5th March, 1839.

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Charleston :

PRINTED BY S. S. MILLER.

No. 50 East-Bay.

1839.

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## AT AN EXTRA MEETING,

*Held on the 14th of February, the following Resolution was adopted :*

**“RESOLVED,** That a Committee be appointed to inquire into the expediency of erecting a ‘Seaman’s Home,’ or Boarding House, with a Chapel annexed, in connexion with the Society.”

The Chairman nominated Mr. W. P. Finley, Rev. Mr. Barnwell, Messrs. Thomas F. Capers, William King, and Charles Edmondston, to compose the Committee.

At an adjourned meeting held on the 18th February, the Committee appointed at the previous meeting, presented the following Report and Resolutions, which were adopted by the Society:

The Committee appointed to inquire into the expediency of erecting a Seaman’s Home, or Boarding House, with a Chapel annexed, in connexion with the Society, beg leave to Report, that your Committee have had the subject under due consideration, and would respectfully recommend the adoption of the following Resolutions, as expressive of their views of the matter referred to them, viz :

**RESOLVED,** That the Society regard the establishment of a Sailor’s Home in this City, with proper regulations, as highly conducive to the general objects of this Society; and that it is decidedly expedient to make an effort at this time in favor of such a plan.

**RESOLVED,** That Committees be appointed for the different Wards of the City of Charleston, and for the Neck, to solicit and receive contributions for the accomplishment of this measure, and that subscription lists be also left at the Gazette Offices.

**RESOLVED,** That a Committee be appointed to prepare a suitable Address, explanatory of the objects and advantages of the proposed Institution, and to make an Appeal to the Citizens of Charleston, and of this State, for funds in aid of this benevolent object, and that the said Committee be authorised and requested to correspond with the Churches, and with public spirited individuals throughout the State, to excite and promote a spirit favorable to this cause.

*Committees of Collection under the Second Resolution.*—Ward No. 1, Captain Thomas H. Jervey, Messrs. C. A. Desaussure, J. Albert Hopkins. Ward No. 2, Rev. Mr. Yates, Judge Axson, Thomas Lehre, Esq. Ward No. 3, Messrs. George B. Locke, T. F. Capers, W. King. Ward No. 4, Messrs. E. R. Laurens, N. Hyatt, J. B. Betts. For the Neck, Messrs. W. C. Dukes, H. Simmons. R. Adger, J. M. Caldwell, W. Yeadon, and Joseph F. O’Hear.

*Committee to prepare an Address, under the Third Resolution*—Messrs. W. P. Finley, R. Yeadon, Jun. and Thomas F. Capers.

On motion of the Rev. Mr. Barnwell,

**RESOLVED,** That as the primary object of this Society, as set forth in its Constitution, is to furnish Seamen with the regular evangelical ministration of the Gospel, it is hereby expressly and distinctly declared, that this object is in no case to be interfered with, by any efforts or arrangements to be made, in reference to the establishment or regulations of the Sailor’s Home.

On motion of R. Yeadon, Jun.

**RESOLVED,** That the President of this Society be requested to carry into effect the Standing Resolution, relating to Sermons and Collections in the different Churches in the City and State.

At a Special Meeting, on the 5th of March, Mr. Finley, from the Committee to prepare the same, presented the following Address, which was accepted and ordered to be printed in pamphlet form, under the direction of a Committee, consisting of Messrs. Finley, R. Yeadon, Jun. Capers, Gregorie, and Rev. Mr. Yates.



## TO THE PUBLIC.

At a late meeting of the Charleston Port Society, it was Resolved, that an effort should be made for the establishment of a "Sailor's Home" in this city, and that a Committee be appointed to prepare a public Address explanatory of the object and advantages of the proposed Institution, with an appeal to the citizens of Charleston, and of this State, for the requisite funds to aid in carrying into execution this benevolent project. In pursuance of this resolution, the undersigned have been appointed by the Society, to bring this subject before the public view, and to urge its claims upon the consideration and patronage of an enlightened community.

The object in establishing a "Sailor's Home," is to provide a suitable Boarding House for Seamen frequenting the Port of Charleston,—similar to those which have been founded with the happiest effects, in Boston, New-York, and other commercial cities of our Union; the establishment to be managed upon such moral and economical regulations, as will afford adequate protection from all frauds and impositions; promote the comfort and convenience of its inmates, and be calculated to secure them, while sojourning amongst us, from those temptations and dangers, to which sea-faring men, in a populous city, are peculiarly exposed. The claim of such an Institution, to public favor and patronage rests upon this basis; that the character of Seamen, as a class, calls loudly for moral reformation, and that the measure proposed, is well adapted to produce this desirable result. Among the conspicuous causes of the demoralized and degraded condition of Seamen, we need not refer to the general character of Sailors' Boarding Houses, as found in all our commercial seaports, and to which the Sailor, as soon as he gets ashore, is decoyed by artifice, or attracted by the force of custom or example, and indeed, until a better be provided, he has hardly any alternative, but to frequent them. We do not think it possible to exaggerate the vile and wicked practices, which are witnessed in these dens of intemperance, debauchery and crime. We believe it must rarely happen that a Sailor escapes from the voracious "land-sharks and vampires" which prowl in these haunts of dissipation and vice, without being fleeced of his hard earned wages; stupified by drunkenness, injured in health, and still more deeply steeped in the pollutions of moral turpitude. It may be difficult to determine, how much of this condition of things is to be regarded as the *consequence*, and how much the *cause* of the vicious character of Seamen. But for the purposes of our appeal, this inquiry is immaterial—of one thing we may be assured, that unless the Sailor can be separated from such places of abode or resort; until he can be induced to shun these horrid receptacles of revelry and sin, it would be idle to expect that his habits will be corrected, or his character reformed; as well may you expect to shelter the lamb in the jaws of a hungry wolf; to extinguish fire, by adding fuel to the flame, or protect one from a raging pestilence, by forcing him into contact with the dis-

case. "It is believed that hundreds of seamen in our own city, are sinking into temporal and eternal ruin from the pestiferous influence of these abodes of moral death." The Church of God may be opened from Sabbath to Sabbath; the "Bethel Flag" may be regularly unfurled, to invite the "Sons of the ocean" to the House of Prayer, and the Gospel may be preached with all the faithfulness and zeal of the most devoted Apostle, but those for whom these services are designed, are most carefully kept from attending them, or if peradventure, any should be found in attendance at a Bethel Church and the stated means of Grace, but little effect can be expected to follow the services of the Sabbath, while the week is spent in such sinks of pollution. The truth is, that it is the interest of the Landlords of such houses, that the Sailor should be ignorant, profane, intemperate, dissolute and reckless, and it is therefore, his policy, to use all the means in his power to prevent or counteract the operation, of those moral influences, which tend to enlighten his conscience, rectify his habits, and benefit his character. It appears to us, then, that the first step to be taken in promoting the reformation of Seamen, is with the concurrence, and under the patronage of our respectable merchants and shipmasters, to provide such an establishment as a "Sailor's Home," where Seamen, while in port, may find shelter, security and comfort; be withdrawn from those snares which beset and endanger the Sailor's path, and be acted upon by the same means of moral improvement, which are enjoyed by the other classes of society. We have heard the opinion expressed, that Sailors cannot be reformed, and that all efforts to this end are chimerical and vain. No opinion could be more illiberal and unfounded. It is nothing less than "treason against human nature, and blasphemy against omniscient goodness." Without adverting to what has been already achieved for the moral and social amelioration of Seamen, of which most ample proofs can be adduced, who that reflects upon the ordinary traits characteristic of the Sailor—his uncalculating frankness—courage and generosity—his keen sensibility for the sufferings of others, and his ready and active zeal to minister to the wants, and relieve the distresses of the unfortunate—who can doubt, that the Sailor with such elements of character and materials for usefulness, may, by proper culture and training, be transformed into the moral, enterprising and valuable citizen. When we consider the ungenial circumstances in which the Sailor is placed, it cannot be a matter of surprise that he should be immoral or profligate. Such a result is the natural consequence of his habits and manner of life. But who can suppose that this state of things is unavoidable and remediless, or that under the preaching of the Gospel, and the influences of God's Spirit accompanying the means of Grace, the character of the Sailor may not be regenerated and exalted into the "highest style of man." We have already remarked, that institutions, such as is now proposed, have been established elsewhere with the happiest effects, and we cannot forbear annexing a few brief extracts from the Annual Report of "The Boston Seaman's Friend Society," which will show the opinion of those who have had the best means of observation on this subject, and whose testimony is entitled to the utmost credit and respect. The packet ship *Switzerland*, Capt. Hunt, which sailed from Boston, in November, 1836, for Charleston and Havre, shipped nearly

all her crew from the "Sailor's Home," established in that city ; much anxiety was felt to know what would be the result of their conduct. Some of them professed to be Christians—all of them to be temperate. It was known that they were going to a Southern port, where every art would be tried to induce them to abandon their ship, and where they would be exposed to all those perils which drown the souls of Seamen in perdition. But the good ship Switzerland returned in due season, with all her crew, except two, who were honorably discharged in Charleston. A communication was addressed to Capt. Hunt, containing several questions, to which he replied as follows :

"Boston, 3d January, 1837.

"P. Cutler, Esq.—Dear Sir,—In answer to your letter, making a few inquiries concerning the crew of the Ship Switzerland, it is with pleasure that I can say, without exception, it was the best crew I ever commanded. I never saw so much peace and harmony on board of a ship. On my arrival at Charleston, the landlords endeavoured to entice them away, but they could not succeed. I was often told in Charleston, by the merchants, it was a pleasure to come alongside the Switzerland, for every man appeared to be at work, and no noise. In Havre, it was the same. On Sunday, when other ship's crews were seen intoxicated, the crew of the Switzerland were dressed clean and reading on board of their ship. I cannot say too much in their praise, and hope I shall be as fortunate the next voyage.

"In answer to your questions, 1st, I never saw or heard of the Crew drinking a drop of liquor. Before leaving Havre, each man subscribed a portion, and bought a quantity of Sugar and Chocolate, that they might have something warm at daylight. 2d. I believe the crew always paid attention to their Bibles. I have often heard them reading and singing in the fore-castle, but the duty of the ship was *never interrupted*. 3d My firm opinion is, that if the merchants would patronize these Houses *only*, and even give extra wages, there would be an immense saving of property and lives. 4th. Every man was obedient and respectful to myself and officers, and took as much interest in the ship as ourselves."

About the same time a letter was received from the Rev. Mr. Sawtell, the Preacher to Seamen at Havre, in which, speaking of the same crew, he says :

"My heart has been greatly cheered in the acquaintance I have formed with the Crew of the Switzerland. They have, since in this port, recommended the Religion they profess, by their conduct, and walked worthy of their high vocation. When such crews sail from our ports, we may safely give them letters of commendation, saying, 'These are our epistles written in our hearts, known and read of all men.' The Lord hasten the time when every vessel that sails, shall be manned with such men. Then will the highway of the Lord be prepared for the speedy redemption of the world."

A communication was also addressed to Capt. Russell, of the ship Florence, which sailed from Boston for New-Orleans, with an entire crew from the "Sailor's Home," and the following answer was received :

"Boston, 4th April, 1837.

Dear Sir—I received your letter of the 4th inst. to day, and have the pleasure to say. 1st. That the Crew of the Ship Florence, under my command, used no spirits during the voyage, or while in port. 2d. They were always obedient and very respectful to their Officers. 3d. There was certainly a very great difference between them and those crews I have picked up from other transient houses. 4th. I think it would be decidedly for the interest of the merchants to be furnished with such crews, as the late crew of the Florence. The effect on the shipping interest, in my opinion, would be this—there would be no mutinies nor fightings. Thus the shipping interest would be much improved. I would, by all means, recommend such houses as is now kept by Capt Brown, (the "Sailor's Home.") Such houses being established and patronized, I think the time would shortly arrive, when most of the difficulties of a sea life would be done away with.—Peace and harmony would triumph over mutiny, and fighting, and intemperance, *the cause of all the troubles onboard ship.*"



Such are some of the benefits which may be expected to result from a "Sailor's Home," and the question now arises, whether an effort should not be made to establish such an Institution in our own city. It may be proper to state, that a Boarding-House, such as we now propose, has been in operation in Charleston to a limited extent for a number of years, but though productive of the best influence within the sphere of its action, it has been found inadequate in size and accommodations, and depending, as it does, upon the voluntary contributions of the "Ladies Seamen's Friend Society," who have generously assisted in furnishing the house and paying the rent, but whose means, we are informed, are considerably reduced, the very existence of the establishment must be precarious. Such an Institution for our Commercial Metropolis, should be on an enlarged and more durable basis. The exigency for such an Institution, is also becoming greater. It is obvious from the brilliant prospects now opening upon the Commerce of Charleston, that in the course of a few years, the number of Seamen frequenting this port will be much increased, and that, as the "Queen City of the South" our influence for "weal or wo," will be greatly augmented. We may also advert to the high and honorable reputation which our emporium has always sustained throughout the Union—to her enlightened and liberal support of all those Institutions, which strengthen and adorn the fabric of civilized society. Unless, we would, therefore, forfeit this honorable distinction, it becomes us to move forward with alacrity and zeal to the benevolent object of ameliorating the moral and social condition of Seamen. Other cities, far inferior to ours, in population and wealth, have already established a "Sailor's Home." The citizens of Savannah have just resolved to raise the sum of \$10,000 for the same purpose, and shall we be willing to be thus outstripped in the career of philanthropy, and withhold our efforts from this noble cause? Are we content to expose ourselves to the just reproach of neglecting the claims of a class of men, who have contributed so much to our opulence and fame, and on whom our future character and prosperity must materially depend? Nor can we view this, as a subject of local or partial operation. It affects the interests of all. It is not only the merchant and shipmaster, who are concerned in the Sailor's being a sober man and a skilful navigator; for as the result of this would be the diminution of the risks and expenses of transportation, the benefit would be felt both by the producer of our staple commodities, and by the consumer of those articles which are received in exchange for them; and who would not be interested, who would not rejoice, to behold this class of men now proverbially abandoned and lawless, converted into an orderly, prudent and respectable population—combining intelligence with energy—discretion with zeal, and piety with enterprize. Our national reputation is also closely connected with the moral character of our Seamen. American Sailors in foreign countries are esteemed in some degree as the representatives of the American character. If intelligent and virtuous, our character as a civilized and Christian nation is elevated and honored; and we could not but regard it as a blot upon the escutcheon of our glorious Republic, that while the Seamen of other nations were exhibiting to the world all the characteristics of social



improvement, those of the United States should continue turbulent, degraded and dissolute.

If then it be desirable to establish a "Sailor's Home" in this city. we are next to consider whether the requisite funds can be raised to carry out the project. It is certain, that the cost of such an Institution would far exceed the present means of the Charleston Port Society. The original design of this Society was "The Promoting the Gospel among Seamen," and while we hail the proposed Institution as a most valuable, if not essential auxiliary, we stand<sup>r</sup>pledged that the resources of our Society, should be faithfully dedicated to that sacred object. Besides which, our resources are small and entirely absorbed in the support of the "Mariner's Church." If then, this philanthropic object is to be accomplished, it can only be by the free will offerings and generous co-operation of the patriotic and humane. The expense of establishing a "Sailor's Home," may be estimated at \$20,000, but it is not necessary to the success of our plan, that this entire amount should be collected in one year; it would be sufficient if in the course of three or four years this sum could be realized. Now if any thing like a spirit corresponding with the magnitude of the object be excited, nothing would be easier than to obtain from the citizens of our State, an annual contribution of \$5000 for four years, for the accomplishment of this work. We believe that very nearly this sum would be received from the merchants of Charleston alone, if the scheme suggested in one of our gazettes, of levying the trifling sum of a cent or two on every bag of cotton, or barrel of rice bought and sold in our market, should be adopted. But without resorting to this unequal contribution, could we not from the 250,000 of the white population of our State, find 500 individuals who are able and willing to be annually assessed with their proportion of the required amount; or among a population of 16,000 in Charleston, could not 200 be found to contribute *twenty-five dollars* a year to this object. We cannot but feel assured that the Sons and Daughters of Carolina, with that hereditary munificence which has always signalized their name, will be found solicitous to devote of their substance, according to their ability, to the erection of so useful an Institution.—Nay, that as with the Hebrews of old, in constructing the Tabernacle in the wilderness, it may even be requisite to restrain their exuberant offerings in this noble cause.

In concluding our address, permit us most earnestly to urge the claims of Seamen, on our generous sympathies and benevolent efforts. And first, they have a claim on our gratitude for benefits conferred. In the business of the world, the Sailor fills a most important place. It is by *his* agency, that we hold communication with foreign lands, and receive their superfluous productions, in exchange for our own. Without ships and sailors, we should not only be deprived of the comforts and luxuries which we enjoy from abroad, but those great staples, on which the prosperity and opulence of this State are based would become valueless, and the very foundations of our power entirely subverted. Nor should we be unmindful of the services of Seamen, as the defenders of our country in time of war. With so exposed and extended a sea-coast as ours, stretching from the St. Croix to the Sabine, it is obvious, that in case of foreign invasion, our fleets must abide the brunt of the battle, and that as in years

past, the honor and glory of the "Star Spangled Banner," must be supported mainly by the valor and prowess of American Sailors, bearing the thunders of our gallant navy, as far as waters roll and the winds can waft them. Now let us consider the privations to which this class of our fellow-countrymen must submit for our benefit, in the part assigned them in the drama of life—the hardships to be endured—the dangers to be braved—the sacrifices to be suffered—and then say whether they are not entitled by all the laws of gratitude, to be requited, by our best exertions in their behalf. But their moral destitution also presents a strong claim upon our charity and kindness. To such an appeal we cannot but hope that a numerous portion of this community will be found most promptly to respond. It is among the Cardinal precepts of our Holy Religion to love thy neighbor as thyself; and when it is asked who is our neighbor, we are taught by the parable of the good Samaritan, that he is our neighbor, whatever may be his name or nation, who stands in need of our help. In obedience to this sacred rule of Gospel morality, Asylums and Hospitals have been founded for sick and disabled Seamen. This is well. But while careful to provide for their physical welfare, is it not culpable to be neglectful of their spiritual interests. While devising means to rescue them from the fangs of bodily disease should we not be equally solicitous to deliver them from those moral disorders which debase the intellect and war against the soul. If intelligence should reach us that some noble ship had foundered at sea, and that a few of the shipwrecked mariners who had survived the horrors of the storm, were cast upon our shores, houseless and destitute, how soon would charity rush to their relief and be seen with open heart and extended arms feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and affording shelter and protection to the homeless wanderers of the deep. But alas! a disaster far more terrible than this, may be the doom of the shipwrecked Sailor.

"A sadder sight the eye can know  
Than proud bark lost and Seaman's wo,  
Or battle fire or tempest cloud,  
Or prey bird's shriek and ocean shroud—  
The shipwreck of the soul."

Let us then engage in this noble enterprize with a zeal and energy proportioned to the magnitude of the object. What is to be done, must needs be done quickly. Every storm which sweeps the ocean, is bearing the objects of our charities, beyond the reach of human effort—Away with the ungenerous thought, that we cannot afford to assist in this work of benevolence! Consider the large proportion of our incomes, now consumed in the luxuries of life—consider the thousands which are lavished amongst us in beautifying our city with splendid edifices and architectural ornaments. Let but a trifling part of this superabundant capital be devoted to the construction of a "Sailor's Home." Then may we hope that the blessing of God will rest on our venerable metropolis. Then will she be, indeed, entitled to the proud appellation of the "Queen of the South," and be hailed by the tempest tossed mariner, when he approaches our shores, as a city of refuge, not only from the angry billows of the deep, but those more awful perils which drown men's souls in eternal perdition.

W. PERONNEAU FINLEY,  
RICHARD YEADON, JUN. } Committee.  
THOMAS F. CAPERS,





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